

2003 Texas MUTCD

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices



Texas Department of Transportation

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is approved by the Federal Highway Administrator as the National Standard in accordance with Title 23 U.S. Code, Sections 109(d), 114(a), 217, 315, and 402(a), 23 CFR 655, and 49 CFR 1.48(b)(8), 1.48(b)(33), and 1.48(c)(2).

Addresses for Publications Referenced in the MUTCD

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 225
Washington, D.C. 20001

American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association
8201 Corporate Dr., Suite 1125
Landover, MD 20785-2230

Illuminating Engineering Society
120 Wall Street, Floor 17
New York, NY 10005

Institute of Makers of Explosives
1120 19th St., NW, Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20036-3605

Institute of Transportation Engineers
1099 14th St., NW, Suite 300 West
Washington, D.C. 20005-3438

National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances
107 S. West St., #110
Alexandria, VA 22314

Transportation Research Board
The National Academies
2101 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20418

Acknowledgments

The Federal Highway Administration gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance that it received from the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and its over 200 voluntary members in the development of this Manual.

CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to the provisions of Transportation Code, § 544.001. I certify that this 2003 Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which contains standards for a uniform system of traffic control devices, is in accordance with the provisions contained in Minute Order 109118 passed by the Texas Transportation Commission on December 19, 2002.

This Manual, with subsequent revisions, shall apply to all traffic control devices installed on or after January 17, 2003 upon the highways, roads, and streets of this State except that traffic control devices conforming to the 1980 Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways on order or under contract prior to January 17, 2003 may be installed. All existing traffic control devices or installations not in conformance with standards in this Manual shall be changed to conform to the new standards herein when replacement becomes necessary. Traffic control devices not previously required but which are required by new standards in this Manual shall be installed by the date indicated on the "Phase in Compliance Dates".

This 2003 Manual cancels and supersedes the 1980 Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, as amended, and all previous editions thereof.

Traffic control device standards contained in subsequent revisions in the form of Official Ruling on Requests for Interpretation, Changes, and Experimentations to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, Millennium Edition, with which this Manual is correlated, may be used as interim standards in the State of Texas, pending incorporation in this Manual as "Revisions".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M. W. Behrens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Michael Behrens, P.E.

Executive Director

LEGAL AUTHORITY

This Manual is issued under the authority of the “Texas Statutes” Chapter 544, Traffic Signs, Signals, and Markings. Pertinent sections are quoted as follows:

“§544.001. Adoption of Sign Manual for State Highways- The Texas Transportation Commission shall adopt a manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic-control devices consistent with this chapter that correlates with and to the extent possible conforms to the system approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.”

“§544.002. Placing and Maintaining Traffic-Control Device-

- (a) To implement this subtitle, the Texas Department of Transportation may place and maintain a traffic-control device on a state highway as provided by the manual and specifications adopted under Section 544.001. The Texas Department of Transportation may provide for the placement and maintenance of the devices under Section 221.002.
- (b) To implement this subtitle or a local traffic ordinance, a local authority may place and maintain a traffic-control device on a highway under the authority’s jurisdiction. The traffic-control device must conform to the manual and specifications adopted under Section 544.001.
- (c) A local authority may not place or maintain a traffic-control device on a highway under the jurisdiction of the Texas Department of Transportation without that department’s permission.

The provisions of this Manual do not create mandatory duties, as opposed to discretionary duties, in the legal sense under the Texas Tort Claims Act and elsewhere. State Department of Highways and Public Transportation v. King, 808 S.W. 2d 465 (Tex. 1991). This Manual does not establish a mandatory legal duty to install particular traffic control devices. This Manual is a standard for design and application of traffic control devices. This Manual is not a substitute for engineering judgement. Bellona v. City of Austin, 894 S.W. 2d (Tex. App.- Austin 1995).

MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

INTRODUCTION

Standard:

Traffic control devices shall be defined as all signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic, placed on, over, or adjacent to a street, highway, pedestrian facility, or bikeway by authority of a public agency having jurisdiction.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is incorporated by reference in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F and shall be recognized as the national standard for traffic control devices on all public roads open to public travel in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 109(d) and 402(a). The policies and procedures of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to obtain basic uniformity of traffic control devices shall be as described in 23 CFR 655, Subpart F.

Any traffic control device design or application provision contained in this Manual shall be considered to be in the public domain. Traffic control devices contained in this Manual shall not be protected by a patent or copyright, except for the Interstate Shield.

Support:

The need for uniform standards was recognized long ago. The American Association of State and Highway Officials (AASHO), now known as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), published a manual for rural highways in 1927, and the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety (NCSHS) published a manual for urban streets in 1930. In the early years, the necessity for unification of the standards applicable to the different classes of road and street systems was obvious. To meet this need, a joint committee of AASHO and NCSHS developed and published the original edition of this Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in 1935. That committee, now called the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD), though changed from time to time in name, organization, and personnel, has been in continuous existence and has contributed to periodic revisions of this Manual. The FHWA has administered the MUTCD since the 1971 edition. The FHWA and its predecessor organizations have participated in the development and publishing of the previous editions. There were seven previous editions of the MUTCD, and several of those editions were revised one or more times. Table I-1 traces the evolution of the MUTCD, including the two manuals developed by AASHO and NCSHS.

Standard:

The U.S. Secretary of Transportation, under authority granted by the Highway Safety Act of 1966, decreed that traffic control devices on all streets and highways open to public travel in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 109(d) and 402(a) in each State

shall be in substantial conformance with the Standards issued or endorsed by the FHWA.

Support:

23 CFR, Part 655.603 adopts the MUTCD as the national standard for any street, highway, or bicycle trail open to public travel in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 109(d) and 402(a). The "Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC)" is one of the documents referenced in the MUTCD. The UVC contains a model set of motor vehicle codes and traffic laws for use throughout the United States. The States are encouraged to adopt Section 15-117 of the UVC, which states that "No person shall install or maintain in any area of private property used by the public any sign, signal, marking, or other device intended to regulate, warn, or guide traffic unless it conforms with the State manual and specifications adopted under Section 15-104." Section 15-104 of the UVC adopts the MUTCD as the standard for conformance.

The Standard, Guidance, Option, and Support material described in this edition of the MUTCD provide the transportation professional with the information needed to make appropriate decisions regarding the use of traffic control devices on streets and highways. The material in this edition is organized to better differentiate between Standards that must be satisfied for the particular circumstances of a situation, Guidances that should be followed for the particular circumstances of a situation, and Options that may be applicable for the particular circumstances of a situation.

Throughout this Manual the headings Standard, Guidance, Option, and Support are used to classify the nature of the text that follows. Figures, tables, and illustrations supplement the text and might constitute a Standard, Guidance, Option, or Support. The user needs to refer to the appropriate text to classify the nature of the figure, table, or illustration.

Standard:

When used in this Manual, the text headings shall be defined as follows:

- 1. Standard - a statement of required, mandatory, or specifically prohibitive practice regarding a traffic control device. All standards are labeled, and the text appears in bold large type. The verb shall is typically used. Standards are sometimes modified by Options.**
- 2. Guidance - a statement of recommended, but not mandatory, practice in typical situations, with deviations allowed if engineering judgment or engineering study indicates the deviation to be appropriate. All Guidance statements are labeled and the text appears in large type. Guidance text is the same size as Standard text, but it is not bold. The verb should is typically used. Guidance statements are sometimes modified by Options.**
- 3. Option - a statement of practice that is a permissive condition and carries no requirement or recommendation. Options may contain allowable modifications to a Standard or Guidance. All Option statements are labeled, and the text appears in small type. The verb may is typically used.**

- 4. Support - an informational statement that does not convey any degree of mandate, recommendation, authorization, prohibition, or enforceable condition. Support statements are labeled, and the text appears in small type. The verbs shall, should, and may are not used in Support statements.**

Support:

Throughout this Manual all dimensions and distances are provided in the International System of Units, a modernized version of the Metric system, and their English equivalent units are shown in parentheses.

Guidance:

Before laying out distances or determining sign sizes, the public agency should decide whether to use the International System of Units (Metric) or the English equivalent units. The chosen units should be specified on plan drawings. Care should be given to ensure that the chosen unit of measurement is known to those responsible for designing, installing, or maintaining traffic control devices.